To: Long Term Homeless (LTH) Supportive Services/Supportive Housing Providers and HMIS Users

NOTICE: The Self-Sufficiency Matrix Assessment will be required starting July 1, 2011

Minnesota Housing and the Department of Human Services have been testing a self-sufficiency matrix tool to assess participant needs and measure participant outcomes in LTH programs. The pilot has been a success, so the matrix assessment will now be a requirement for all LTH programs starting on July 1, 2011.

TRAINING SESSIONS-SAVE THE DATE

We will provide regional training sessions on the Self-Sufficiency Matrix Tool in June 2011. Program managers and service staff should attend one of the sessions. Registration materials will be emailed in early May. HMIS training will follow later this year. Training Dates:
  ➢ June 2nd: Metro/Central Regions- Brookdale Library
  ➢ June 6th: Metro/Southeast Regions- Dakota County Service Center
  ➢ June 8th: Northwest/West Central Regions- Walker
  ➢ June 9th: Southeast/Southwest/Central Regions: Mankato
  ➢ June 16th: Northeast Regions: Duluth

Why use the matrix assessment?
  ⇒ *A new tool for assessing and engaging participants: The self-sufficiency matrix assessment can be a useful engagement tool to work with participants to identify needs and goals.*
  ⇒ *Have more meaningful and useful reports: The matrix reports provide a record of individual participant needs, progress and outcomes. They also provide a record for your program to see if participant needs and outcomes change over time.*
  ⇒ *A program management tool: Managers may use summary results to identify participant service needs, evaluate program strengths and areas that need attention, and to make the case for funding supportive housing and services.*

BACKGROUND

The Initiative to End Long Term Homelessness has specific goals and outcomes. The information we currently collect in HMIS provides much of the information we need to track progress, but is limited to housing stability and income outcomes. We needed a tool to measure outcomes in other areas (self-sufficiency, social and behavioral outcomes, etc.)

Several states and cities around the country have been using a self-sufficiency matrix which was developed in Maricopa, Arizona and has been tested and validated. The self-sufficiency matrix

is an assessment and outcome measurement tool for homeless assistance programs. The matrix measures a participant's status on a scale of one to five for 18 domains at different points in time (initial entry, regular intervals during program stay, and exit).

Service providers have found the matrix to be not only a useful assessment tool, but also a very effective way to engage participants. The reports are useful to review with participants to share progress and continue dialogue about needs, plans and goals. Agencies can also use reports to see how participants are faring in their program and to see how participant needs and outcomes change over time.

HUD had planned to include the matrix in the revised HMIS data standards, but they were not included in the final version in March 2010. We had been waiting for HUD to implement the matrix since 2006, so in 2010, Minnesota Housing and the Department of Human Services decided to test the matrix with a group of providers around the state to pilot the implementation process. Hearth Connection also implemented the matrix with their network of providers in July 2010. We learned a lot from the pilot and had positive feedback from providers, so we decided to move forward and implement the tool on July 1, 2011 for all Long-term Homeless (LTH) supportive housing funded by Minnesota Housing (rental assistance and site based) and the DHS LTH Supportive Services Grant. The Family Homelessness Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP) will also start using the matrix on July1.

Process and Practices for LTH Programs
1. All adults and unaccompanied youth participants are assessed
2. Participants are assessed at initial entry, and then every six months and at exit
3. Initial entry assessments are required for all current participants (back dated to entry date) and new entries as of July 1, 2011
4. All provider service staff are trained to use the matrix assessment tool with the attached training tool (PowerPoint presentation)
5. Service staff meet regularly to review scoring practices/consistency
6. Service provider needs to develop process for tracking six month assessment due dates
7. There are reminder tools and data checking reports in HMIS to help track due dates
8. Agency management involvement is critical for optimal use of the tool
9. Assessment data is entered into HMIS and reports are submitted to MN Housing and DHS every 6 months (with the annual reports)

Training
- MN Housing and DHS will conduct regional training sessions in June 2011 about using the matrix assessment tool and the implementation process
- The PowerPoint training tool can be used as a self training tool for service staff
- Data entry in HMIS is very straightforward. We will provide training with Wilder for running reports and using the data.

Reports

There are several types of matrix reports available in HMIS:

- Data checking report
- Client level progress and achievement reports
- Summary provider level reports on client progress, entry and exit score distribution

Examples of reports currently available in HMIS are available on our website:
http://www.mnhousing.gov/initiatives/housing-assistance/housing/MHFA_010777.aspx

Timeline

⇒ June 2011: Matrix assessment training for providers
⇒ July 1, 2011: Start using the matrix assessment with participants
⇒ By September 30, 2011: Complete back-dated entry assessments for current participants
⇒ Fall 2011: HMIS report training
⇒ January 2012: All entry and interim matrix assessments completed and entered into HMIS
⇒ February 2012: Matrix summary reports due to MN Housing and DHS

Minnesota Housing and DHS are excited to launch the matrix assessment tool. We hope that it will be a useful tool for supportive housing service providers to work with participants and tell a more meaningful story about the many benefits of supportive housing for improving lives.

Examples of how some providers have used the matrix data (from other states):

☆ To measure the success of a veterans employment pilot program (baseline measure, pilot measure) - demonstrated that the pilot was effective.
☆ One program found they had no impact on substance abuse over time, so they changed their treatment model, yielding better results, so they changed their model from zero tolerance to supported recovery.
☆ To show the negative impacts of child care budget cuts on participant outcomes, and make the case for restored funding.

Questions?

For Minnesota Housing LTH funded projects, please contact Vicki Farden at 651-296-8125 or Vicki.farden@state.mn.us or Carrie Marsh at 651-215-6236 or carrie.marsh@state.mn.us
For the Department of Human Services LTH Supportive Services Grant, please contact Alison Niemi at (651) 431-3848 or Alison.niemi@state.mn.us

Thank you!

Attached:
o Self-Sufficiency Matrix Assessment Tool (short form)
o PowerPoint Training Presentation

Matrix information and documents are also be available on the MN Housing website:
http://www.mnhousing.gov/initiatives/housing-assistance/housing/MHFA_010777.aspx